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TOWARD THE PRESERVATION OF A HERITAGE  
(Dedication of the Howard University Museum)

Cold grips the day;  
relentless wind slaps walls  
paying tribute to the past.  
Here accumulated bit by bit,  
a heritage escapes the sweep  
of wind and rain, of ice, of desert sand.

Here the abstract is trapped  
in tiny shard, starlight of other ages.  
The rites and deeds of early men  
are anchored on the tip of pens  
to live on the yellowing page.  
Brass and gold sculpture proof  
in frozen form.  
Portraits define features here and there;  
one name, then another echoes  
from the long hill climb.

Segment by segment the past resurfaces  
to join the truth of history  
moving toward our future,  
whole and new in our thinking.

May Miller  
8/12/79